

**CITY OF ROCKVILLE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

**June 19, 2001
MEETING NO. 01-06**

APPLICATION: HDC01-0191

DATE FILED: May 17, 2001

APPLICANT: T.C. Gordon & Rita
Wagner

ADDRESS: 201 W. Montgomery Ave.



PROPERTY DESCRIPTION: The Wagner house, built by Edwin West in 1895, is a 2 ½-story, three-bay by three-bay, Queen Anne style structure. It faces south and is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of West Montgomery Avenue and Van Buren Street. The grounds contain numerous mature trees and shrubs as the site was once an oak grove on Margaret Beall's property of the Beall-Dawson house at 103 West Montgomery Avenue. Although many of the trees were cut down during a fire in 1894 to keep the fire from spreading to neighboring houses, some were replanted and are now more than a century old. This house was built after the fire destroyed the original. A portion of the original house can be seen in the cellar where a brick foundation is superimposed on parts of the old stone foundation.

The garage was built in 1984 and is connected to the house by an enclosed breezeway to the north façade. It is entered from a driveway on Van Buren Street.



201 W. Montgomery Ave.

PREVIOUS ACTIONS AT THIS ADDRESS:

HD-190-87 Permission to remove a diseased cherry tree. Approved 10/20/87.
A-180-83 Variance from the side street setback requirement to construct a garage.
 Approved 10/1/83.
HD-95-83 Permission to construct a one-story, three-car garage and to demolish the
 existing free standing garage. Approved 8/16/83.

REQUEST:

The applicant requests a Certificate of Approval to install a six-foot high wood picket fence along the west property line in the rear yard. The fence will be approximately 67 feet 4 inches in length. The pickets will be 1 inch by 4 inches. The fence will not be painted and will match the neighbor's existing rear yard fence except that it will be taller.



Existing fence between rear yards of 201 and 203 W. Montgomery Ave. Applicant owns white picket fence in foreground.



View of proposed fence line from right-of-way. Fence will be obscured by trees and shrubs.

Proposed location of fence at 201 West Montgomery Avenue



Facing west from Van Buren Street



Facing east from 203 W. Montgomery Ave.

STAFF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of HDC00-0191 based on a site visit to the property and the applicant's adherence to the Rockville Historic District Commission's publication, *Guidelines for Historic Property Owners – Fencing*, and the City's zoning regulations regarding fencing.

- 1. Historic, archeological, or architectural value and significance of the site or structure and its relationship to the historic, archeological, or architectural significance of the surrounding area.*

This house is often illustrated or photographed as an example of "Victorian" Rockville. Its location at the intersection of three busy streets (West Montgomery Avenue, Great Falls Road, and West Jefferson Street), its corner turret, east façade Rockville bay, wide verandah, and bright yellow paint emphasize this image.

The original house built at this site was built c. 1887 but was destroyed by fire in 1894. The property was owned by John W. Hogg, Chief Clerk of the Navy Department. The property was located diagonally across the street from the residence of master builder Edwin Montgomery West at 114 West Montgomery Avenue (the Daisy Magruder House). Mr. West built the second house for the Hogs in 1895. West's plan was a mirror image of his own house but he varied the massing and placement of its corner, two-story, polygonal Rockville bay and surface details. This house, along with his own residence, are considered to be among Mr. West's finest buildings.

Mamie Hogg succeeded her parents as owner of 201 West Montgomery Avenue. Subsequent owners were J. Gardiner Darby, Helen Gassaway, and Carter Clagett. The present owners, the Wagners, have owned and lived in the house since 1954.

2. *The relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the entire structure and to the surrounding area.*

Wooden picket fences were popular in the nineteenth century and are recommended by the fence guidelines in "Information for City of Rockville Historic Property Owners" as appropriate to the historic districts. The proposed fence does not exceed the City's height restrictions for rear/side yards and will not compromise the historic integrity of the house. The fence will be largely hidden from view from West Montgomery Avenue by dense shrubbery and trees. Left unpainted, it will match the existing fence to which it will be connected.

3. *The general compatibility of exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials proposed to be used.*

The proposed fence is compatible with the exterior design, scale, proportion, arrangement, texture, and materials of the house. The design and materials will match the existing fence, although it will be taller. The applicant desires a six-foot fence to screen the view of the neighbor's driveway.

4. *To any other factors, including aesthetic factors, which the Commission deems to be pertinent.*

Approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. The Applicant must apply for and receive a fence permit from the City of Rockville before proceeding.